

experiences of immigration and assimilation. This is a rich resource useful for undergraduates, graduates, and teachers alike. The book's scope and self-imposed limits are reasonable and effective, and this reader looks forward to when a similar study can be written of the 1980s and 1990s.

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Bob Goudzwaard, Mark Vander Vennen, and David Van Heemst. *Hope in Troubled Times: A New Vision for Confronting Global Crises*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

Few books are as timely or as prophetic as *Hope in Troubled Times*. Writing prior to the global economic meltdown in 2008 that caused international financial institutions to shudder, the authors warned about the volatility of the financial markets before it was fashionable to do so. They also noted the potentially catastrophic impact of other challenges such as environmental degradation, ideologically based conflict, global poverty, and insecurity.

The book opens with words that cogently and succinctly explain its premise: “[O]ur world seems to live under the curse of scrambling for solutions but not finding them” (15). The authors begin by rejecting the notion that human ingenuity can keep ahead of escalating global challenges simply by resorting to raw intelligence. They also dispute the premise that solutions which worked for past crises are adequate to enable humanity to adapt to harsh new realities. Instead, they argue that “many of today’s problems seem to have developed immunity to our well-intended solutions. They have become like viruses that resist medicine or like pests that have developed a defense against pesticide” (31).

One of the most insightful discussions pertains to the development, impact, and ripple effect of ideologies. Citing six phases of developed ideologies, the authors explain how ideologies have evolved at periods in history to justify the oppression of one people by another. While not explicitly using the language of the current “war on terror,” or significantly applying

their perspective directly to the Iraq or Afghanistan wars (mentioned on only 14 of 205 pages of text), they provide language for explaining how these conflicts have been sold to the Western world in ideological terms, and what the impact of an ideological rationale can be.

When an ideology defines a goal to be an absolute end, anything that gets in the way of it becomes evil, say the authors. Those who oppose evil are by definition good, “even if their actions result in other people suffering under cruel treatment. How close, in our view,” the authors conclude, “this lies to the demonic” (34). These statements reflect on the danger of justice and compassion being removed from discourse about contentious issues and are worth much rumination. This volume is a prophetic call to re-examine our tendency to absolutize good and evil.

Although articulating this sobering message of potential global crises comprises most of the book – which even the authors admit is “hardly uplifting” (169) – this massive dose of tough love frames the most urgent issues and stresses why these concerns must be taken seriously now. It sets the stage for suggesting a way forward. All is not lost. Rather, the authors testify they are inspired by an “enduring conviction that there is real hope for our troubled, mired world – genuine, concrete hope that deeply engages global poverty, environmental destruction, and widespread violence” (16).

This hope comes from a commitment to “live justly, to love our neighbors, and to take care of God’s creation as good stewards” (127). These actions may not seem powerful in and of themselves, but they can start a process that begins to undermine harmful ideologies that for too long have dominated social, economic, and political discourse.

This is one of the most challenging and readable books I have come across in many years. It is well written, logical, persuasive, and coherent. It inspires readers not to lose hope and to continue to work for peace and justice even though they cannot be assured of success. *Hope in Troubled Times* speaks with a common voice and effectively avoids the dissonance so often present in manuscripts with multiple authors. It is essential reading for anyone concerned about the rising tide of the seemingly intractable problems facing our globe – and the apparent impossibility that one person can do anything impactful about them. It could easily be used as a textbook in college or university courses.

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Thomas P. Scheck. *Origen and the History of Justification: The Legacy of Origen's Commentary on Romans*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.

In the lively and sometimes rancorous debate over justification that has rippled throughout the Christian world, all roads, it seems, lead back to the sixteenth century. Since the 1999 joint Roman Catholic-Lutheran Declaration on Justification by Faith, new energy has poured into the conversation.<sup>1</sup> Even before that, descendants of the Anabaptists likewise engaged the theme. Dutch Mennonite theologian Sjouke Voolstra wrote that “Anabaptists always interpreted justification in the light of sanctification.”<sup>2</sup> J. Denny Weaver and Gerald Mast recently reflected on the views of justification of Denck, Hut, Hubmaier, and Marpeck, asserting that Sattler “affirms Lutheran justification by faith but also, in line with Catholic thought, stresses that faith will result in good works.”<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Scheck's book makes the case that all who think this conversation matters must travel much further back in the Christian story. Indeed, he argues that Origen's *Commentary on Romans* has influenced Christian thought on justification into the 16th-century Reformation and beyond. Further, the third-century Alexandrian's readings of Romans were both close to Paul and remarkably relevant to 21st-century discussions.

As the first English translator of Origen's Romans commentary,<sup>4</sup> Scheck carries the credentials to back up his argument. In clear and readable prose, he makes accessible not only to patristics scholars but also to other theologians, biblical scholars, and interested lay readers the exegetical questions at stake and the history of reception that marks Origen's influence down through the centuries. (Noting that virtually our only access to Origen's great commentary is through the Latin translation of the fourth-century Rufinus, Scheck usually provides the Latin in text or footnote for